

Remarks

Claims 1-20 are pending in the application, and are subject to restriction and/or election requirement. By this paper, claims 2, 3, and 6 are amended, and claims 4 and 8-14 are withdrawn from consideration. Based on the following, examination and favorable consideration of the pending claims is requested.

Election/Restrictions

The Examiner states that the application contains claims directed to two patentably distinct species: "Control 1" and "Control 2". The Examiner further states that the species identified as Control 1 is described in column 4 of the parent application, now U.S. Patent No. 6,682,458 (the '458 patent), and the species identified as Control 2 is described in column 5 of the '458 patent.

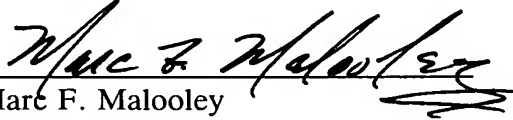
Applicants hereby elect without traverse to prosecute the species identified as Control 1, in which claims 1-3, 5-7 and 15-20 read thereon.

The Examiner imposed a restriction requirement based on three groups: Group I identified by claim 2, Group II identified by claim 3, and Group III identified by claim 6. The Examiner states that Groups I, II and III are related as a process and an apparatus for its practice. By this paper, claims 2, 3, and 6 are amended, such that each is now drawn to a process. Applicants believe that the amendments to the claims render moot the restriction requirement. If, however, the Examiner maintains the restriction requirement, Applicants elect without traverse to prosecute Group III, comprising claims 1, 5-7 and 15-20.

Based on the foregoing, Applicants request prompt and favorable consideration of the elected claims, including each of the amended claims 2, 3, and 6.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: July 7, 2004

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